

status Report

The Quarterly Newsletter on
Disability Issues in Alberta



THE PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MAY 2001

Challenger Park Construction Begins

Seven acre Calgary sports facility designed for people with disabilities

A fully accessible sport and recreation facility in Calgary is one step closer to reality.

On February 28, 2001, Premier Ralph Klein, Rotary Club International President Frank Devlin and other dignitaries were onhand at a ceremony to launch construction of Rotary Challenger Park. When completed, the park will cover almost seven acres of land and include two baseball diamonds, soccer and football fields, a 400 metre athletic track, a playground and picnic areas, an indoor visitor centre, and basketball and tennis courts—all of which have

been designed from the ground up to be completely accessible for people with disabilities.

"Rotary Challenger Park will be a place where people with disabilities and their families can take part in the simple pleasures of sport and recreation, pleasure that so many of us simply take for granted," said Premier Klein at the sod turning ceremony. "The project is also about providing Albertans with disabilities a place where they challenge themselves, a place to discover their strengths and abilities."

Construction of the park, located at the corner of 36th Street

and McKnight Boulevard in the Northeast, is underway with completion expected in 2003.

"Good things like this take time, and whether users are athletes of the Special Olympics or neighbourhood kids, this is a good thing," said Premier Klein.

The project is a joint effort of the Rotary Clubs of Calgary, the Calgary Airport Authority, Parks Foundation Calgary, user groups and government. Fundraising of the necessary \$13 million is being led by the Rotary Clubs.

Barry Lindemann, a C5 quadriplegic and Member and Community Affairs Coordinator with the Canadian Paraplegic Association's (CPA) Alberta division, was on hand for the sod turning. Lindemann spearheaded the initiative for CPA and led the 17 user groups who pushed for the facility and outlined its final design.

"The Park is going to be something for persons with disabilities," says Barry. "So often people with disabilities are left with things that are just afterthoughts. This is going to be a park that the whole community uses but it's going to be designed for everyone to use. People with disabilities will get priority bookings. The park will be a great way to get people with a disability involved in sports and recreation, and who knows, perhaps one day Paralympians may get their start in it."



Council Chair Re-Appointed

Rob Lougheed, MLA for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan, was recently re-appointed as Chair of the Premier's Council.

"I'm pleased to continue my work in this field," says Rob, initially appointed in 1998. "With the Alberta Disability Strategy, this Council is on the verge of completing some very important work. The additional term allows me to continue to support the Strategy, and I look forward to playing an important role in its implementation."

As Chair, Rob oversees the work of the other Premier's Council members and secretariat, while acting as a liaison with the Alberta government.



The excavation begins: from left to right, Calgary Alderman Ray Jones, Premier Ralph Klein, CPA Alberta's Barry Lindemann, Rotary Club International President Frank Devlin, Rotary Club International Vice-President Bill Gant, and Rotary Club International Governor District 5360 Mibty Audenart. (Photo courtesy CPA Alberta).

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Help Wanted

In the recent government re-organization, the Premier's Council "moved" from the department of Health and Wellness to Alberta Community Development. Fortunately, moving does not mean packing up our files and office equipment. We'll stay in the same place and continue to carry out our core businesses of policy development, advocacy and evaluation. We have been warmly welcomed by Alberta Community Development, and will be pleased to contribute to its mission, which speaks to helping "all Albertans participate fully in the social, cultural and economic life of the province."

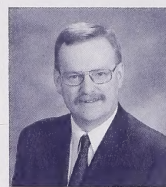
We think this is a good fit with the Premier's Council recently published *Full Citizenship: Alberta's Disability Strategy Interim Report*. The report contains 13 macro strategies and 10 building blocks (which focus on overarching and

systemic issues) aimed at fundamental change in the way we support people with disabilities. These strategies are built on the premise that piecemeal approaches haven't worked. The goal is nothing less than the creation of a well-coordinated and comprehensive system of support that results in a measurable, long-term, positive impact on the lives of persons with disabilities. The Interim Report also contains 45 specific recommendations and calls for five immediate actions to demonstrate Alberta's commitment to change.

The Council has long been concerned about the very high rate of disability (over 30%) in First Nations, Metis, Inuit and other Aboriginal communities. Accordingly, the Council has established the Aboriginal Disability Advisory Committee to provide input into Alberta's Dis-

ability Strategy. The committee is also reviewing previous work in this area and will be making recommendations to Council by June 2001.

The Premier's Council has set out 22 specific tasks for itself in *Full Citizenship*. The Council will research the cost of living with a disability as a person grows and ages. We think this will contribute to the disability community's review of AISH and efforts to improve the employment status of persons with disabilities. Our community partners have joined us in some of these tasks. The Alberta Disabilities Forum is working with us on an update of the Community Supports model and on holistic approaches to employment. We're working with the Edmonton Employment Partnership, and other agencies who provide employment supports for people with disabilities, on a conference or forum to bring together employers and workers with disabilities. Other partners will likely join us as we work on these projects which will form



part of the final report of *Full Citizenship*.

In the weeks ahead, we will be talking to many individuals and groups about Alberta's Disability Strategy.

With the publication of the Interim Report we are asking two simple questions: did we get it right, and, if so, will you work with us to significantly improve the status of persons with disabilities?

Alberta's Disability Strategy was built through extensive community consultation. With continued strong community support, fundamental change will occur. The Interim Report is being sent to all groups and organizations on our mailing list and to others by request. It will be featured on the Council's web site and available in alternate formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us. As always, we welcome your comments and support.

Follow-up to *In Unison* Released

On March 30th, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services released *In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada*. The report is a follow-up to the framework *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* that was released by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers in October 1998. *In Unison* marked the first time governments came together to express a shared vision on disability issues.

In Unison 2000 was developed over the past year in consultation with disability and Aboriginal communities and other stakeholders. It provides statistical and comparative data as well as individual stories and effective practices that highlight the challenges adults with disabilities face and what governments, individual employers and others are successfully doing to address them.

The report also identifies potential areas for further collaboration. In particular, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services have asked officials to work jointly on examining the labour market needs of persons with disabilities and assessing the feasibility of a new disability tax ben-

efit to assist with the cost of disability supports.

"This report shows there are a number of positive outcomes that can be achieved when governments, employers, the non-profit sector and communities work together to develop solutions that respond to the needs of persons with disabilities," said Jane Stewart, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, in announcing the release of the report. "By building on this collaborative approach we can help ensure all Canadians have an opportunity to fully participate in society."

The Premier's Council will examine *In Unison 2000* and apply its findings in the final version of Alberta's Disability Strategy.

In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada is available on the Social Union website at <http://socialunion.gc.ca>. Print copies of the Report are available by writing to Public Enquiries Centre Human Resources Development Canada, 140 Promenade du Portage Hull, Quebec K1A 0J9 Fax: 819/ 953-7260. Alternate formats can be obtained through InfoTouch—call 800/788-8282 on a touch-tone phone or through teletypewriter (TTY).

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The Road Less Travelled

"A place of realized potential opens itself to change, to contrary opinion, to the mystery of potential, to involvement, to unsettling ideas."

Max DePree
Leading Without Power

A mentor and friend recently told me that we'll know we've made a difference when organizations cease to group themselves by disability type and start to organize themselves around common challenges. This has always been a central part of the vision for the Champions of Workplace Diversity Consortium.

Ironically, the consortium has faced great adversity—both from supporters and those who might rather see the effort fail. And the truth is that it may fail. In the last month, the centre has accepted the resignation of its Executive Director, its Project Manager, and the Chair of the Interim Board.

The Champions who have remained at the table, however, are those who understand that change does not occur without great adversity. They've begun a renewal process and a reorganization. Two principles of this renewal are truth and transparency. So why don't we start there?

Critics have proposed from the start that the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) has had ulterior motives—dreams of building an employment empire on the backs of other disability organizations. The truth is that CPA has enabled the mere consideration of this project through its corporate development and desire to create a cross-disability approach to employment supports. Others have condemned its insistence for accountability even though Alberta Human Resources and Employment has required CPA to sign a contract on behalf of the 30 organizations

that were originally involved, without any legal protection in place. Had it not been for the courage and vision of the CPA Board and its Executive Director, this opportunity may not have been possible.

There is an old business adage that says, "If you're satisfied with our services, please tell your friends. If you're dissatisfied, please tell us." A challenge for Champions has been finding proponents who are bold enough to support the unknown, without later needing to hedge bets in the hallway whispers. There are plenty of reasons why this centre could fail. None of them need to be because the stakeholders themselves planned its demise. Transparency is the way through this challenge, and honesty among all stakeholders will cast light onto those whose intentions are truly ulterior.

As Emerson once wrote, "when it is dark enough you can see the stars." This has been an experience shared by those who have committed their efforts to the success of the centre. Committed to the original model of Champions, where the centre is a complimentary resource to "owner agencies" who provide specialized supports and services for all persons with disabilities based on individualized needs, stakeholders have agreed to dissolve the original Interim Board of this initiative. In its place, a Steering Committee is now responsible for communications, the yet unaddressed business plan and spending priorities, and the development of a formal agreement, which will protect all present and future organizations involved. Complementing this team is an Operational

Committee which is focusing on the priorities involved in executing the Alberta Human Resources and Employment contract that the Champions' Career Centre is currently managing (i.e., human resource policies, organizational management, standards and measures, and accountability to outcomes).

For decades, organizations have had to compete with each other in the hopes of winning provincial contracts. It is no surprise, then, that while attempting to build an alliance, trust has been difficult to build amongst former competitors—now collaborative partners. The lack of trust played a major role in the difficulties recently faced by Champions. These two committees have decided to start here—building trust through a commitment of intention, competency and perspective. In her book, *Forging Non-Profit Alliances*, Jane Arsenault explains that "attention to values, service standards, service protocols, and vocabulary is of particular importance for nonprofits" but that "developing and maintaining trust is [a] critical aspect of managing any kind of alliance." The fact is that Champions is a ground-breaking initiative in the province of Alberta. It represents an innovative means for providing services that allow for easier, more comprehensive access to employment supports for all persons with disabilities and it has continued, unprecedented corporate support—not only in the way of dollars, but in the commitment from Corporate Alberta to change the way it thinks about employing persons with disabilities. There are no road maps, no instructions, no guarantees for success. There is only the will to find a better way, and the hopes that this way can be found together.

The Premier's Council is involved with this project for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to prove to the provincial department that at least



in the area of employment supports, community capacity is beginning to heal from fragmented pieces into a supportive network. The Council exists wherever consensus

can be found in an effort to facilitate this growth. The fact that initially over thirty organizations came together to explore common employment opportunities, indicated to the Premier's Council, a desire to change. It is why we have participated in the growth of the Alberta Disabilities Forum, the Alberta Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health and it is why we continue to participate in initiatives that may one day provide seamless networks of services, as in the Community Supports II Model.

Organizations can be very much like individuals in the face of adversity. Given the challenges that persons with disabilities face, it is natural to expect that the organizations that work with them would not hold immunity from such barriers. I think that it is important, however, not to be our own worst enemies as there seem always to be plenty of others waiting around the next corner. Similarities can be found, however, when you measure the character of either the individual or the organization upon overcoming adversity. Both are stronger, richer and better equipped for the next barrier because of their past experiences. The lessons and challenges of the Champions initiative have been rich and have taught the enormous value of community members who *make* the time to work together. If you are involved in a similar building of a relationship or an alliance that you believe will better serve an individual with a disability, then you will understand what I mean. For the individual, and for the organizations, it can sometimes be a lonely road.

If you have questions or would like to receive information on the Champions' Career Centre in Calgary, call (403) 265-5374.

Massive Trial for Alzheimer's Treatment

Alzheimer's disease is an increasing concern as our population steadily ages. In the United States, it's estimated that six percent of those aged 65 and over are afflicted with the brain disease, which results in memory loss followed by acute dementia and, ultimately, death.

While experts agree that Alzheimer's remains incurable, new hope for a preventative treatment continues to surface from studies that suggest people taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, known as NSAIDs, are less likely to develop the disease.

NSAIDs include the drugs naproxen and celecoxib, which are often taken for arthritis and other inflammatory conditions. Naproxen is sold under the brand names Aleve, Naprosyn and Anaprox. Celecoxib, one of a new class of drugs called COX-2 inhibitors, is sold as Celebrex.

A massive, seven-year clinical trial at four U.S. medical centers is being organized in an attempt to determine if NSAIDs are capable of preventing Alzheimer's. The study, called the Alzheimer's Disease Anti-inflammatory Prevention Trial, or ADAPT, will attempt to recruit 2,600 participants, who must be 70 or older. While participants must not have Alzheimer's symptoms at the time they're introduced into the study, they must have a family history of Alzheimer's, which is thought to have a hereditary link.

Participants will be randomly assigned to take the anti-inflammatory drugs or a placebo for seven years. They will take memory and other cognitive tests when they enroll, and will be evaluated every six months. The scientists will compare the number of volunteers who develop Alzheimer's on the placebo with those taking the drugs. If, as

the trial progresses, it becomes clear that the drugs are effective, the trial will be stopped and the placebo group would get the drug.

While no one knows the exact cause of the disease, there is growing evidence that inflammation plays a role by damaging brain cells. It is thought that anti-inflammatory drugs might help by dampening the inflammatory attack which is associated with the buildup of deposits of amyloid, a sticky protein, that dot the brains of victims.

Research in the 1990s showed that NSAIDs have modest benefits in warding off the disease, but the findings, discovered only in retrospect, aren't enough to be scientifically conclusive—thus the need for the new trial. During a recent test, NSAIDs failed to benefit people who already have Alzheimer's.

The study is funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Program Aimed At Reducing Teen Driving Deaths and Injuries

A soon-to-be-launched teen safety driving program, in which a young driver signs an agreement to drive safely and is closely monitored through a toll-free telephone number decal affixed to the vehicle, is billed as a way for insurers to practice loss prevention.

The North American-wide I Promise program involves the signing of a contract between the parent and the teen, with others calling in to report the performance of a young driver. The goal is to reduce the number of teens dying or injured in car crashes.

"This gives insurers a chance to practice loss prevention while at the same time do a phenomenal bit of social marketing," says Gary Drenfeld, executive director of the I Promise program.

Once the program is launched, insurers will purchase yet-to-be-determined subscriptions to the program and pass them along to policyholders at no cost. To date in Canada, only Dominion of Canada is on board with the project. Drenfeld, however, says momentum is growing. "We have very broad-based community support," he says. "We are currently negotiating with a number of insurers to adopt the program."

Drenfeld says a model of the program has been developed and is set to launch in January, 2002. He adds that a three-year research study will determine the effectiveness of the program, through driving comparisons of I Promise members and non-members.

For more information, please contact the I Promise Program at 20 Suter Crescent, Dundas, ON L9H 6R5 telephone 905/628-4847 or email drenfel@spectranet.ca.

Aging in Place...Are We Equipped?

In the United States, recent surveys point to a disability rate of 20%. In other words, one in five people have a disability. Here in Canada, our 2001 Census will allow us, for the first time in a decade, to measure our own disability rate. Needless to say, the Premier's Council and other disability organizations across the country expect the results to mirror that of the United States, demonstrating a steady growth of disability.

With little doubt, it is our aging population that is accounting for this trend—people who have had disabilities for most or all of their lives are living longer, and the segment of population who have lived without disabilities for most of their lives are acquiring disabilities in their later years.

In response, the Council has started asking some important questions. Are we equipped as a society to handle this? In particular, where are all these people going to live? Will they be able to continue to live in their own homes, or age in place? Will the necessary supports be available to allow this to happen? And if they're not, will this signal a large scale

return to institutions as a solution?

We're beginning to discuss these questions within our own framework, trying to determine if we need to study this problem in more detail and try to arrive at solutions. Look for dialogue in future issues of *Status Report*. Meanwhile, we naturally welcome any input from any source—please send us your comments on this or any issue, using the contact information contained on page 2.



Canadian Literary Works Now in Alternate Formats

On March 7th, the Consortium of Library and Information Services for Blind and Print Disabled Canadians launched the Canadian Heritage Millennium Digital collection—an assortment of prominent Canadian literary and historical works in alternate formats for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Through Millennium grant funding, the consortium is digitizing seminal English and French language Canadian novels, poetry, speeches, historical documents and other texts. Many of these works have never been accessible in the formats that people who are blind, visually impaired, deaf blind or print disabled require.

The collection is a rich bilingual resource of 500 works spanning almost 500 years. Students will be able to research Canada's history through historic documents such as Nellie McClung's *Clearing in the West: My Own Story*. As well, readers will be able to enjoy everything from Canadian classics by Margaret Laurence and Stephen Leacock to contemporary novels by Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje.

"All Canadians share a fundamental right of access to information," said the Honourable Herb Gray, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, during the official kickoff of the collection. "Through the Canadian Heritage Millennium Digital Collection, we are continuing to fulfill that obligation and to level the playing field between blind and visually impaired Canadians and their sighted neighbours."

During the event, special presentations were made to Canadian publishers who provided the Consortium with electronic files of books and texts included in the



collection—Doubleday Canada, Key Porter Books, McClelland & Stewart, Penguin Books Canada, Random House of Canada, and University of Toronto Press.

"Publishers open the doors to accessibility," said Rosemary Kavanagh, Executive Director of the CNIB Library for the Blind. "Braille, audio synchronized to text and electronic-text, for example, can all be generated from a single electronic file. More content can be made available faster in the format that's required."

The consortium estimates that only three percent of what is published is currently available in formats that people who are blind and visually impaired can read.

Members of the consortium are the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Materials in Alternate Formats; the CNIB Library for the Blind; the Government of British Columbia Library Services Branch; Langara College; L'Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille; and La Magnétothèque gara College; L'Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille; and La Magnétothèque.

Expanded Children's Benefits

Your child may be eligible for additional benefits from the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) program. As a result of expanded income eligibility levels, children in low-income families are now eligible for:

- Free dental care
- Free prescription drugs
- Free eye glasses
- Free emergency ambulance services
- Free essential diabetic supplies

Benefits are based on the family's net income from the previous year's tax return. Enrolment in the program is free and families that qualify will receive ACHB benefit cards within 2-3 weeks that will allow them access to the approved services and products directly from the providers at no cost.

To obtain an enrolment application package, telephone the ACHB call centre at (780) 427-6848 or, for toll free access, call the Rite Line at 310-0000 and then 427-6848.

Appeal Process for Incontinence Supplies

Alberta Aides to Daily Living (AADL) has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of appeals for incontinence benefits. Due to this increase, AADL would like to remind you that an AADL Registered Nurse (RN) Authorizer for incontinence products should submit appeals. The only exception is when a Region does not have access to an RN.

Prior to submitting an appeal for an increase in catheters or diapers the RN should:

- Review the product(s) the client is currently using to ensure that it/they are appropriate.
- Review residual void outcomes.
- Review of self-catheterization technique, which includes observing the client self-cathing, hand washing and cleansing the catheter.
- Assess clients hydration and 24 hour bladder diary.
- Ensure that a urologist and/or incontinence specialist report is submitted to AADL.

Presently, AADL provides 60 catheters for a two month period. This is based on current research and allows for a new catheter daily.

Please direct all appeals to your AADL RN Authorizer.

Good Samaritan TeleCare

TeleCare is a Good Samaritan support program intended to maximize independence. When a problem arises, the client presses a button which is linked to a 24-hour monitoring centre. A professional emergency response operator has immediate voice contact with the client, assesses the situation and dispatches appropriate help.

Special adaptation switches can be used by clients who may have difficulty using a personal help button. Monitored smoke detectors and various security accessories are also available.

For information, call Good Samaritan TeleCare at (780) 431-3630 (Edmonton) or 1-800-676-8397.

Everybody Plays...Everybody Wins

Here's a unique variation on inclusion.

The Bloorview MacMillan Centre is one of the first in North America to have initiated a reverse-integration program where able-bodied children from the Toronto community are invited to attend a school for kids with physical disabilities.

Games and activities are structured in such a way that students are encouraged to brainstorm together to find ways to accommodate various challenges and disabilities. For example, one game involves the children pretending to be parrots flying through the rainforest in search of food. In order to play the game, each "parrot" has to fly with—and be connected to—a partner. But not all partners are able to hold hands.

"Instead of holding hands, what could I do?" asks Paul Alcamo, one of the teachers of the reverse-integration class.

"Use a noodle," calls out Megan Chan, 5.

"What if your partner can't hold onto the noodle?" Alcamo throws back.

"You could have someone tie it to your arm," says Philip Rosa, 5.

"Great idea," Alcamo replies, as he attaches the noodle to his wrist with a piece of cloth. "Now we can stick together to find the fruit tree."

It's a school filled with action, colour, fun and laughter as children of all abilities learn to accept their differences and celebrate their similarities.

"By engaging the kids in problem-solving, we try to adapt equipment or the play space or the actions in a game so that every child finds a way to play," Alcamo explains. "We give kids the power to include by giving them knowledge about their differences."

Alcamo believes the able-bodied students are perhaps the biggest winners in the program because they are gaining an understanding that few people without disabilities will ever have. "Their parents believe that the only way to raise children who will fully include people with differences is to immerse them in an environment where disabilities are as much the norm as different hair colour."

It's all about teaching kids that different isn't better or worse and that finding ways to include all people should be automatic, not a matter of choice.

"Inclusive education has been done very quickly, and there isn't enough practical information out there about how to do it," says Heather Gilman, another reverse-integration teacher. "There hasn't been enough research, or teacher training, or adapting of class environments for a diverse community."

Simply bringing kids together doesn't guarantee full inclusion for all kids. "There's an assumption that if you bring kids together, because they're



Photo courtesy Canadian Intramural Recreation Association

kids, they will understand that differences needn't be an obstacle to play," says Elizabeth Morley, principal of the Institute of Child Study Laboratory School, of which the reverse integration class is a satellite. "We haven't found that to be the case. We've found that specific instructional and awareness-building activities are necessary to develop inclusive behaviours."

Many of the teachers in the reverse integration program have noted that able-bodied children are often hesitant to get involved with kids who use equipment such as wheelchairs or a communication device. The approach they find works best is to have a lesson where therapists bring the equipment in and give all of the children a chance to try it out.

"Once they've used a wheelchair, they make the observation that, 'It's hard to do this, and it takes longer to get to the lunch room' and they're going to be more patient and supportive when it takes their friend longer to get places," says Gilman.

It's like the old saying goes—you have to live it to learn it.

For more information about developing physical activity programs that are suitable for kids of all abilities, please contact the Bloorview MacMillan Centre at 416/424-3866. The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability is also available to provide leadership resources, contact information and a variety of other services that will help to make active living programs and activities in your community more inclusive for persons with a disability. For more information, contact the Alliance by phone at 800/771-0663, by email at info@ala.ca, or via the Internet (www.ala.ca).

Nurturing Assistance Project Seeks Input

Nurturing assistance is a service that provides physical assistance to parents with disabilities who have young children.

A Nurturing Assistant (NA) is a paid employee who works under the direction and in the presence of the parent with a disability. Their role is to assist the parent with bathing and changing the child, preparing meals, lifting and carrying, nursing and cuddling the child, playing and parent/child interacting, all according to the daily needs of the parent and child.

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) is working to increase awareness of and funding for nurturing assistance.

CILT would like to hear from:

- parents with a disability who have had experience with nurturing assistance or a similar service;
- parents who have not used nurturing assistance, but would like to comment on its relevance to their family situation;
- nurturing assistants;
- attendants;
- service providers;
- consumers planning to use nurturing assistance;
- individuals who would like to review a pre-publication draft

The goal of the project is to define nurturing assistance more clearly and to explore ways to make the process more rewarding for parents and children, and more workable and cost-effective for service providers. A book will be produced as a result, including a "how-to" guide for parents, prospective parents, service providers and funders wishing to establish nurturing assistance services. Publication is scheduled for September 2001.

If you have an experience to share, or would like to review the draft publication, contact Mary Ocampo at CILT, phone: 416/599-2458, Ext. 26; TDD: 416/599-5077; fax: 416/599-3555; email: pdn@cilt.cnd.com.

Report Gives New View of Disability in America

Nearly one in five persons—53 million people—reported having some level of disability in 1997, according to a report recently released by the U.S. Government Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Even more striking is that 33 million reported that they had a severe disability.

The report is simply titled *Americans With Disabilities: 1997*.

The Census Bureau defines a person with a disability as someone who has difficulty performing functional tasks or daily living activities. A learning or developmental disability is also classified as a disability. A person has a severe disability if he or she is completely unable to perform one or more functional tasks or daily living activities, needs personal assistance or has one of the severe conditions described in the report.

Not surprisingly, the report's authors suggested that those with severe disabilities are much more likely to receive welfare benefits, have low levels of income and live below the poverty line.

Specific findings include:

- Of all people aged 15 and over, 25 million had difficulty walking a quarter of a mile or climbing a flight of 10 stairs or they used a mobility aid.
- About 7.7 million people age 15 and over had difficulty seeing the words and letters in ordinary newspaper print (even with glasses).
- About 14.3 million people age 15 and over had a mental disability, including 3.5 million with a learning disability and 1.9 million with some form of age-related dementia.

The indication is that an aging population, combined with improved life-saving medical interventions, are contributing to a growing disability rate. It will be interesting to see if the results from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (conducted as part of the 2001 Census) confirms that a similar trend is taking place in here in Canada.

The Census Bureau report is based on a 1997 survey of approximately 32,000 households and is subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

Happy 50th, Easter Seals!



The Easter Seals Ability Council recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Here in Edmonton, an open house to celebrate the milestone was attended by Oiler forward Rem Murray, who posed for a photo with poster child Madison Baer-Stecyk and Jodi Zabłudowski, Director of Operations.

RDC to Offer Brain Injury Caregiving Course

Red Deer College is working to develop a course designed to help caregivers working with people with brain injuries. The college will begin to offer the course during this fall's programming.

The course will provide caregivers with the tools they need to prevent burnout and understand the symptoms people with brain injuries experience. While the course is suitable for professionals, it's expected that family and friends will benefit the most, as survivors are often released from rehabilitation into the care of family or friends who are completely unprepared for task.

The experience is comparable to "dropping (family and friends who provide care) off a cliff," said Bill Stinson, president of the Central Alberta Brain Injury Society (CABIS), in an interview with the *Red Deer Advocate*.

CABIS teamed up with the Red Deer Community Foundation in donating the \$10,000 required for development.

Worldwide Network of Ventilator Users

The International Ventilator Users Network (IVUN), coordinated by Gazette International Networking Institute (GINI), is a worldwide network of ventilator users and health professionals experienced in long-term mechanical ventilation.

IVUN publishes *IVUN News*, a quarterly newsletter, offering articles on family adjustments, equipment and techniques, travel, ethical issues, medical topics, and resources. Contributors include health professionals and ventilator users themselves.

The *IVUN Resource Directory*, published each fall, lists long-term ventilator users, health professionals committed to home care and mechanical ventilation, as well as equipment and mask manufacturers and other resources.

IVUN's goal is to foster a positive image of ventilators and to demystify their use—ventilator use should appear as common and natural as the use of eyeglasses or hearing aids or wheelchairs or any other technical aid that improves people's lives.

For more information, contact IVUN at 314/534-0475 or email gini_intl@msn.com.

GST Rebate for Adapted Vehicles

You may be eligible to claim the GST that you paid on the purchase of a qualifying motor vehicle or on a modification service performed on your motor vehicle on or after April 4, 1998.

If you exercised your purchase option under a lease agreement, you may be able to claim the rebate. If you have paid GST on the part of the lease payment that is attributable to special features or adaptations, you may be able to recover the tax paid in error.

A "qualifying vehicle" is equipped with a device designed exclusively to assist in placing a wheelchair in the vehicle without having to collapse the wheelchair, or with an driving control to facilitate the operation by a person with a disability.

Form GST518 is only available on the Internet (<http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/E/pbg/gf/gst518eq/gst518-e.pdf>).

For more information, contact Sylvie Brunet at 613/957-9409 or Danny Rai at 613/957-2162 and refer to Technical Information Bulletin B-086.

UK Unveils Developmental Disability Strategy

British Health Secretary Alan Milburn has unveiled a major new strategy aimed at radically improving the lives of people with learning disabilities (note that the term “learning disability” used in the UK is the equivalent of “developmental disability” used in North America, and includes Down Syndrome).

The strategy, outlined in the paper *Valuing People: A New Strategy For Learning Disability For The 21st Century*, contains a series of key initiatives designed to tackle the social exclusion and discrimination experienced by many people with learning disabilities.

Four key principles of civil rights, independence, choice and inclusion lie at the heart of the new proposals, which have cross-government backing and view people's needs from a life-long perspective.

The key initiatives backing these principles are a new Learning Disability Development Fund of about \$150 million over the next two years; an end to long-stay hospitals by helping people move to more appropriate accommodation in the community; specialist local services for people with severe disabilities; developing integrated facilities for children with severe disabilities and complex needs; a five-year program to modernize local services; a new national learning disability information centre and help line; and the first ever National Objectives for services for people with learning disabilities.

The White Paper also outlines support for caregivers, recognizing that caring for a family member with a learning disability is a lifelong commitment. To help caregivers, about \$1 million over the next three years is being made available to help develop a national learning disability information center and help line.

The proposals aim to enable people with learning disabilities to have access to a health service designed around their individual needs, with fast and convenient care delivered to a consistently high standard and with additional support where necessary.

“People with learning disabilities have for too long had their needs ignored,” said Milburn at the report's release. “For 30 years forgotten generations of people with learning disabilities have lost out. That must change. A revolution in care is needed to increase opportunities for thousands of people, their carers and families. Alongside better services there will be a new drive to improve education and employment opportunities. Our ambition as a government is to create a society where there genuinely are opportunities for all.”

The UK government estimates there are approximately 210,000 people with severe learning disabilities (children, adults and older people) who are long-term users of health and social services, and a further 1.2 million people with mild to moderate learning disabilities believed to be intermittent users of health and social care services.

In other disability news from the UK, government ministers are calling for household goods to be redesigned so that people with disabilities find them easier to use.

The move follows a report commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry that revealed many people with disabilities experienced difficulty twisting, pulling or lifting some objects—for example, opening jars or lifting kettles.

“The design community and manufacturers in the UK have a large responsibility to ensure their products can be used safely,” said Kim Howells, Minister for Consumer Affairs, in a recent issue of *Magic Carpet*, a British disability publication. “A large percentage of society is being excluded from using everyday household products because their needs are not fully considered in the design stage.”

Note: Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities Board is tackling many of the same issues as the UK's new strategy. Alberta's Disability Strategy will work on similar goals from a cross-disability perspective.

Terry Fox Hall of Fame Call for Nominations

The Terry Fox Hall of Fame is calling on individuals to nominate distinguished Canadians who have made significant contributions to assisting or enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities for consideration as inductees. Nominations are requested by August 7, 2001.

Both disabled and able-bodied persons are eligible for consideration. There are three categories of inductee: Builder, Achiever or Athlete. Builders improve the quality of life for people with physical disabilities through work in science or medicine, advocacy, education, employment and housing. Achievers overcome disabilities and create new opportunities in all avenues of life. Athletes are persons with physical disabilities who have excelled in sport.

“The induction into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame recognizes people who have made a difference and

opened doors for people with disabilities—people who, like Terry Fox, are an inspiration to us all,” says Vim Kochhar, Chair of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons, sponsor of the Hall of Fame.

This year's inductees include Sam Sullivan, a quadriplegic Vancouver City Councillor who has founded numerous innovative programs for people with disabilities, including the Tetra Society.

Those wishing to nominate an individual should mail, fax or email a detailed account of the individual's background along with letters of support, articles, photos and other documentation to the Terry Fox Hall of Fame, 731 Runnymede Road, Toronto, Ontario M6N 3V7, fax no. 416/760-9405, email Whynot@sympatico.ca.

For more information, contact Dorothy Price or Joan Champ at 416/760-7351.



Boomers Opening Door for People with Disabilities, Says B.C. Report

Baby boomers retiring in record numbers may open the door for more people with disabilities to get jobs, according to a report released in March by Mike Farnworth, B.C.'s minister responsible for disability issues.

"By 2010, the number of people retiring in B.C. will outnumber job-seekers for the first time in history," says Farnworth. "If we start planning and preparing now, that could mean jobs for thousands of people with disabilities who want to work. The report presents ideas for launching this process."

The report, *Enhancing Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities*, sets a goal of having every work-ready person with a disability employed by the year 2020. The report offers 27 recommendations relating to

education, training, legislative and administrative changes within the provincial government to help people with disabilities take advantage of upcoming shifts in the workforce.

"The opportunities created through this demographic shift can have a significant major impact and will require society to focus on people's abilities—not their disabilities," said Wolfgang Zimmermann of the National Institute of Disability's management and research branch.

The 2020 report results from a 10-month special project in the Social Development Ministry that included discussions with people with disabilities, advocacy groups, employers, community agencies, the Workers' Compensation Board, the Insurance Corporation of BC and Human Resources Development Canada.

Research available through the B.C. Office for Disability Issues shows that more than 200,000 British Columbians with disabilities are willing and able to work, but society still puts too many obstacles in their path.

"The valuable skills and capabilities of people with disabilities have been overlooked for too long," said Mary-Woo Sims, B.C. human rights chief commissioner. "By acting now, we can bring about changes needed in workplaces so that people with disabilities are able to take advantage of the emerging opportunities in the labour market."

The 2020 report is posted on the ministry website at www.gov.bc.ca/sdes/ and will be available in alternative formats including Braille, large print, disk and audio cassette.

President Bush Embraces Disability

The U.S. Air Force has announced plans to hire 7,000 people with disabilities during the next five years.

And starting this summer, any electronic and informational technology bought by the federal government must be adaptable to people with disabilities.

The plans are part of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, unveiled in March. The initiative earmarks \$880 million over five years to expand employment opportunities for the one in five Americans with disabilities.

Bush's proposed law follows former President Clinton's commitment last year for the federal government to hire 100,000 people with disabilities by the end of 2005, which included the Air Force's 7,000.

There's little doubt that people with disabilities voted overwhelmingly for former Vice President Al Gore. Bush, however, has pleasantly surprised many in the disability community during his first 100 days with his forward-thinking disability policies.

Overall, he has been seen as reaching out to the disability community by initiating new empowering programs, expanding existing programs, and backing his actions with funding—overall, his budget provides more than \$8.6 billion to fund the New Freedom Initiative in fiscal year 2002.

New Interactive Tool for Employers

Changing Perspectives is an interactive resource guide for hiring persons with disabilities. Produced by EmployAbilities, an Edmonton based non-profit, charitable organization, this 19-minute video and CD-ROM package was developed to change employers' attitudes and comfort level while preparing them with the basic etiquette tips when interviewing persons with disabilities.

EmployAbilities came up with the idea to produce the package when an extensive search failed to find a suitable tool with Canadian content. Armed with a \$50,000 grant from the Alberta Lotteries Fund, the project moved forward with the development of an Advisory Board with members from EmployAbilities, Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta), Easter Seal Ability Council and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Additional funds were secured through the Employment De-

velopment Programs and Services, Human Resources Development Canada, the Government of Canada's Employment Equity Positive Program Partnership Fund, and EmployAbilities.

Comments from users are very positive:

"It's an excellent tool for job developers to use with potential employers."

"It portrays persons with disabilities as active participants in an interview setting, and I will use it to show my clients on how to take a positive role in interviews."

"This product will assist my employees in gaining greater comfort when working alongside a co-worker with a disability, as well as providing service to customers with disabilities."

The video & CD-ROM sell for \$198 for the set (GST included). To order, contact EmployAbilities at (780) 423-4106.

Ahoy, Mate!

DSAA wants you onboard this summer.

If you're a person with a disability, the Disabled Sailing Association of Alberta wants you to get involved with sailing this summer.

DSAA is so determined to spread the word about sailing that it's holding Learn-to-Sail Camps throughout the province (see sidebar for dates/locations).

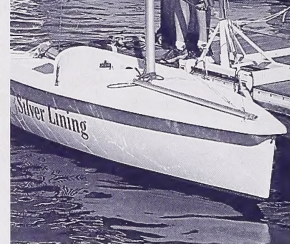
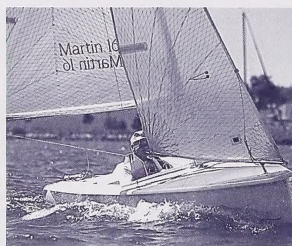
"Our mandate is to provide opportunities to go sailing," says Steve Alvey, DSAA treasurer and spokesperson. "For the last few years, we've working hard on fulfilling an Alberta-wide mandate. So we sail lots in Calgary, as you know, but we're trying to make it work in the rest of Alberta."

Alvey explains that the Association has traditionally taken its equipment and sailboats across Alberta each summer, offering an introduction to sailing. The result has been a rewarding experience for individuals, but it's failed to materialize in many lasting commitments to sailing—or any permanent spin-offs of DSAA in other communities. He's hoping that the Learn-to-Sail-Camps will change all that.

"Last year, we learned that by running a camp in Calgary where we could control the situation, people have a much better time—they make friends, they meet other people from different places. So we decided that's the (format) we're going to try this year—to bring people to a camp that's residential where they eat together, sleep together, tell lies and all that sort of stuff. The focus is on building community as much as it is on learning sailing skills. The ultimate goal of the camps is to have a small number of people spark and say, 'Hey, I didn't know this was possible, and I'd like to do more of it, and I'd like to do it in my community.'"

Still thinking that sailing might be a little demanding for you? Think again, says Alvey. "When you first present it to anyone with a disability, they just go, 'Nah, won't work for me...I'm going to get wet...It's too much hassle.' All those barriers come up in their minds. Well, the key message is that anyone can do it."

Alvey points to Barry Lindemann as an example. Lindemann, a high-level quad who works for the Canadian Paraplegic Association



No Limits: Over the past ten years, disabled sailing has become a recreational pursuit for people with all levels of disability, thanks to sophisticated technology. (photos courtesy DSAA Alberta)

in Calgary, concedes he had doubts when he first learned about DSAA almost three years ago.

"I didn't want the hassle of getting in and out of the boat and I didn't want to get wet," says Lindemann. "I wasn't sure that if I went out, I would get back to the dock okay. Listen, I hadn't been away from my wheelchair in five years, and I was skeptical whether I could really sail the boat. Overall, I expected it wouldn't be worth the hassle."

So he didn't pursue it at the time. But last summer, Barry was finally convinced to get aboard—and he now admits he was pleasantly surprised. "The staff were very friendly and knowledgeable," he recalls. "Getting in and out of the boats was done fast and safely with a big Hoyer-style lift. They put me in the driver's seat, helped me to get comfortable, explained how the controls worked, and I was out sailing the boat myself in two minutes. There was someone with me for safety, but I was in control."

Sailing for people with even severe disabilities is made possible by DSAA's state-of-the-art Martin 16 boats.

"It was easy to sail," says Barry. "I had no trouble working the controls. I used the Autohelm system—it was like driving my electric wheelchair. Right, left, in, out; there was a big learning curve the first time out, but I caught on quickly and that was it. I felt more comfortable in the Martin 16 seat than I do in my own wheelchair! My concerns about being able to work the boat alone were totally unfounded."

At the end of his first sail, Barry says he was hooked. "I thought, 'Why didn't I do this sooner?' I mean, for \$15—you can't do anything for \$15—and to be able to go sailing in your own boat, have someone to help you in and out and get you on the water safely, on a beautiful day? It was not only fun and recreational, it was like a vacation from the office!"

Not surprisingly, Barry's become a strong supporter and promoter of sailing for people with disabilities and the DSAA—and he urges people to be more willing to try sailing than he initially was.

"What's holding you back? Just knowing that I could do something new was a big bonus for me. So often I get stuck in a rut in living my day-to-day life with a disability and I see other people doing things and think that I can't. Sailing is something that truly anyone can do. I'd really ask, 'What's holding you back?' Don't be as dumb as I was—give it a shot."

Climb Aboard!

The Disabled Sailing Association of Alberta provides all Albertans with disabilities the opportunity to access and enjoy sailing! Through our Partnership with CPA and the support of the Alberta Paraplegic Foundation, you can join us at one of our Learn-to-Sail Camps this summer:

May 29 - June 1 Chestermere Lake (Calgary)

July 7,8,14,15 Glenmore Reservoir (Calgary)

July 10 - 13 Sylvan Lake (Red Deer)

August 4 - 5 Cold Lake (Cold Lake)

August 26 - 29 Glenmore Reservoir (Calgary)

Cost is \$229 (financial assistance available for travel from anywhere in Alberta and accommodation. For more information or to register, visit www.cadvision.com/dsaa or call (403) 238-0689.

The True Face of Mental Illness

I have to confess to being a little annoyed with the advertising the Alberta Mental Health Board is doing to fight the stigma of mental illness. For the past several months, they've used print ads, posters and brochures to educate people about the true facts of mental illness.

Don't get me wrong—their cause is noble and their purpose is pure. I just don't like it when other people talk for me.

Maybe I'm oversensitive, but having others come to the rescue of the mentally ill strikes me as perpetuating the notion that we're helpless and pathetic. Okay, it's very subtle, but I feel it and I'm sure others must.

The only thing that's going to make me happy is when the mentally ill themselves have a strong voice in the media, showing the true and positive face of mental illness as an inspiration to those who will suffer the disease and demonstrating to all that we are as deserving of respect and trust as any other citizen.

Other survivor groups, such as cancer, heart and diabetes organizations, have outgrown the pathetic approach. Fortunately, we are no longer subject to "Little Timmy" style campaigns featuring poor Timmy with crutches and braces on his legs. The emphasis today, as it should be, is on showing people with disabilities or illnesses as having dignity, character, pride, and the ability to speak and think for themselves.

Now, the illustrations used by the Mental Health Board certainly do not depict the mentally ill as pathetic. In fact, they show rather handsome, calm, normal looking people in idyllic, soft-focused photographs.

But they certainly don't look like the mentally ill people I'm familiar with. In my trips in and out of hospital and through my

work with consumer groups, I've encountered a lot of mentally ill people, and frankly, most of them look like life has beat the tar out of them. Maybe the fully recovered look good, but those who have severe and persistent or active illnesses almost always look distressed.

If the public gets their impression of the mentally ill from the Mental Health Board illustrations, they'll have no idea of the pain and suffering caused by mental illness.

The Mental Health Board shouldn't try to make us look good and normal. They should make us look brave—that's the true public face of the mentally ill.

So instead of the "Poor Timmy" approach, I believe the Mental Health Board has swung the pendulum too far in the opposite direction.

Look again at what other survivor groups are doing. I'm thinking in particular of breast cancer and one woman's courage to appear on TV and say, "Sure, I lost a breast to cancer, but I'm going to carry on and do well in spite of it." I believe their cause did well because of that honest and forthright approach.

We need people with real mental illnesses to stand up and say, "I've survived and you can too."

I don't think the fight against stigma is going to get anywhere until we too start speaking in the first person. The Mental Health Board should create opportunities that allow consumers themselves to say publicly, "I have a mental illness and I'm going to

do well, despite your prejudices."

The first target group for any anti-stigma campaign, therefore, has to be the mentally ill themselves. I'm sure most are like me and made things harder for themselves through buying into the shame of being mentally ill. This shame is perpetuated because we've never had any positive role models. Even if we did, we were discouraged not to talk about mental illness. Well, we have to change that.

We have to give mental illness a public face—a real face, not an idealized one. We need people with real mental illnesses to stand up and say, "I've survived and you can too." The Mental Health Board has taken great pains to point out that mental illness is common: "One in five Albertans will suffer a mental illness in their lifetime." We have to drive that point home by stating names, walking in dignity, and being depicted in real ways.

I got involved in a support group because I was curious to know others who had a mental illness. Until then, the only people I knew with a mental illness were the ones I met in hospital—where, of course, they were not at their best.

I got further involved in the self-help movement because I became determined to prove to people that, just because I had a mental illness, it did not mean that I lacked character, honesty or intelligence. Since then I've aggressively sought opportunities to prove that in a very public manner.

In Medicine Hat, I belong to the Mood Disorders Association. The group has been very effective in getting the public's and media's attention, despite working with very little money. In the last couple of months, we've had a feature story in the newspaper

when we donated a SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) Lamp to be set up in the library, a feature article on one of our members on the subject of bipolar disorder, and multimedia coverage of our participation in Mental Illness Week. This is the best attention the mentally ill can get—actively participating in and contributing to the community. And the cost is peanuts.

Now, I'm not trying to put down the Mental Health Board. I say God bless them and all their good works. I'm just saying that I think their advertising campaign puts too pretty a face on mental illness. There should be more recognition of the pain and suffering involved. And I'm saying that the Mental Health Board or anyone else will never be as effective in fighting the stigma of mental illness as survivors themselves.

I know there is a hidden majority of the mentally ill who don't want public recognition of their illness. That's fine. Until stigma is defeated, mental illness can be the kiss of death for employment and other opportunities. There is a small but significant number us, however, who are more than willing to fight the good fight.

And make no mistake—we're neither pathetic or helpless.

Richard Scott is a member of the Alberta Mental Health Self Help Network, a semi-autonomous organization that represents the interests of mental health consumers across the province. The Network has existed for ten years, and has a democratically-elected board with members representing the seven regions of Alberta. This editorial first appeared in the December 2000 issue of the Network's newsletter, *Thinking Allowed*, which is distributed to 1,600 members four to six times per year. In addition to disseminating its own newsletter, the Network has a small lending library in its Edmonton office, and makes presentations in person and using the AMHB video telehealth mental health service. For more information, contact the Alberta Mental Health Self Help Network, Suite 328 Capital Place, 9707 – 110 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2L9, Phone: 780/482-6576, Email: network@cmha.ab.ca

Airborne Again!

Determination, love of sport and a tiny ventilator have allowed Ola Grind Hermo to fly again.

Ola Grind Hermo, a 34-year old from Røros, Norway, broke his neck in shallow-water diving accident in 1993. At the time, he was captain of the Norwegian National team in 8-way formation skydiving, which, at the time, was training in Florida for the U.S. Nationals.

The result was a C4 fracture, leaving him dependent on a ventilator.

Last July, nearly seven years after making his last jump, Ola made a triumphant return to the sport he so dearly loves. At Østre Aera, the Norwegian centre for skydiving, he made a tandem jump from an altitude of 18,000 feet. Thirty five Norwegian and Swedish skydiving friends formed a 35-way formation around Ola and his tandem pilot, who had been his skydiving partner before his accident.

"My tandem jump was so perfect and it's difficult for me as an old full-time, full dedication skydiver to describe for other people what the experience meant for me, especially in English," says Ola.

He adds that the jump was made possible by the unique, tiny LTV-1000 ventilator, developed by Pulmonetic Systems of Colton, California. This unit, the size of a notebook computer, operates on a number of power sources, including an internal 1-hour battery.

"I strapped the LTV-1000 to my body under my jump suit," says Ola, "and it worked just perfectly. Thanks to you all of you at Pulmonetic Systems who made this brilliant ventilator, and also for making it so small! With this, both I and other disabled people can set ourselves new goals and break new limits. And thank you for enabling me to do things I have dreamt of for over six years."

The jump was filmed as part of a documentary on Ola's life, his injury and recovery, and the other things he is planning to do.

"I hope to have my website ready this month, with pictures and video, so all my vent friends can see the preparations and the actual jump," says Ola. "Feel free to email me (oghermo@online.no) if you have any questions as to how we did the jump, or if anyone is interested in doing a tandem jump using a vent from Pulmonetic."



New Organization Promotes Recreation

A new non-profit organization in Spruce Grove, Alberta, is dedicated to promoting recreational opportunities for children with disabilities. The S.I.L.V.E.R. (Special Individuals Learning Values Embracing Recreation) Heart Society was formed by a dedicated circle of parents and community leaders who are striving to see the initiative become a model for other communities.

According to founding member James Back, the Society is based on the principle that all children need recreation, just as they need food, exercise, rest, hopes and shelter.

"By providing a vehicle for fostering growth and self-esteem through participation in fun and leisure-oriented activities, our goal is to supplement the educational experiences and life-skills of children of all ages with special need," says Back. "There is a burgeoning opinion that the brain develops through the use of the hands—for example, through such activities as gardening, playing music, learning a hobby or crafts, by making a simple salad."

He adds that the Society is liaising with the Tri-Municipal Family Leisure Centre currently being built in Spruce Grove, and that programs will be offered at a designated resource room at the Centre when complete.

For more information, contact James Back by mail (5, 26213 Township Road 512, Spruce Grove, Alberta T7Y 1C6) or by email (wwillows@telusplanet.net).

Accessible Cabins in Grande Prairie

If you're looking for the ultimate getaway from the busy city, Wild Rose Cabins, located just minutes outside Grande Prairie, might be for you.

Visitors to Grande Prairie now have an alternate—and very pleasant—place to stay. Wild Rose Cabins provides all the amenities of larger facilities, including natural gas fireplaces, Jacuzzi tubs, natural gas BBQ on deck, TV/VCR, full bathrooms, and kitchenettes. All bedding, towels, dishes and cutlery are supplied.

The five cabins, which are open year round, are wheelchair accessible and close to the golf course. The rates per cabin are \$89 per night plus taxes.

To make reservations or for more information, call (780) 814-6919 or visit their website (www.wildrosecabins.com).